

Aruba's Bocas: HOME TO THE RAREST FOSSIL REEFS ON THE PLANET!



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Trump officials loosen strings on federal education money for Iowa. More states could follow

By **COLLIN BINKLEY**
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is giving Iowa more power to decide how it spends its federal education money, signing off on a proposal that is expected to be the first of many as conservative states seek new latitude from a White House promising to "return education to the states."

Iowa was the first state to apply for an exemption from certain spending rules after Education Secretary Linda McMahon invited states to request the flexibility last year. Such waivers have been offered for years but are finding new interest as Trump officials leverage all available tools to remove the federal government from local education.

McMahon formally approved Iowa's plan Wednesday at an event in the state. Indiana and Kansas have also applied to be exempted from certain parts of federal education law, and leaders of other states have expressed interest.

McMahon told The Associated Press that the new flexibility will free up time and money now devoted to ensuring compliance with federal rules. With fewer strings attached, states can pool their federal dol-



Education Secretary Linda McMahon speaks with reporters in the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House, Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, in Washington.

lars toward priorities of their choosing, including literacy or teacher training, she said.

"We are eliminating that sort of, not bottleneck, but that additional compliance for the states, and that's just going to be incredibly helpful to the state," McMahon said.

"It's not going to have go through the Department of Education, and it's going to flow directly more to the states," McMahon said.

Iowa's newly approved waiver applies primarily to education money used by the state's education

agency, not the larger sums of money that flow to the state's more than 300 public school districts.

Under the arrangement, federal money from four programs aimed at teacher training, English learners, after-school programs and academic enrichment will be pooled into a single pot with fewer limits on how it is spent. Iowa's plan will merge about \$9.5 million over the course of the waiver, which runs through September 2028. How much goes toward one purpose versus another is up to state officials.

Iowa said it will save about \$8 million in staff time that went toward making sure that spending complied with regulations.

The state will be required to show that it is still meeting the spirit of the federal laws behind each funding source.

Known as block grants, that funding model is a longtime dream of conservatives who say money from the federal government comes with too many strings attached.

Opponents say block grants would allow states to redirect money away

from the students who most need the federal aid, including low-income students and English learners, and toward Republican priorities. Democrats in Congress urged McMahon to reject block grant requests in a letter in May, saying it would fail "the very students these provisions aim to support."

The waiver approved for Iowa is far narrower than one initially proposed by the state in March. That one asked McMahon to combine 10 funding sources into a single block grant, both for the state's education agency and for the state's school districts. The early proposal requested flexibility for programs including Title I, which sends more than \$100 million to Iowa schools with large shares of low-income students.

Iowa's new plan leaves Title I funding untouched.

Education Department officials said Iowa's new plan reflects the flexibility that can be granted under existing law.

McMahon has separately asked Congress to pass a budget that would combine much of the nation's federal education funding into a single block grant. Her proposal would zero out the four spending programs being consolidated in Iowa. □

Associated Press

White House completes plan to curb bedrock environmental law

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The

Trump administration has finalized a plan to roll back regulations implementing



Wind turbine bases, generators and blades sit at The Portsmouth Marine terminal that is the staging area for Dominion Energy Virginia, which is developing Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind, Dec. 22, 2025, in Portsmouth, Va.

Associated Press

a landmark environmental law that the White House says needlessly delays federal approvals for energy and infrastructure projects. The action Wednesday by the White House Council on Environmental Quality rescinds regulations related to the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires federal agencies to consider a project's possible environmental impacts before it is approved. Katherine Scarlett, who leads the council, said in a statement that the directive will "slash needless layering of bureaucratic burden and restore common

sense to the environmental review and permitting process."

Under Trump, she added, "NEPA's regulatory reign of terror has ended."

The action comes as Congress considers legislation intended to speed up permitting reviews for new energy and infrastructure projects and limit judicial review under that law.

Republicans and many Democrats believe the 56-year-old law has become mired in red tape that routinely results in yearslong delays for major projects. The law requires detailed analysis for such

projects and allows for public comments before approvals are issued.

A bill approved by the Republican-controlled House would place statutory limits on environmental reviews, broaden the scope of actions that do not require review and set clear deadlines. It also would limit who can bring legal challenges and legal remedies that courts can impose.

Democrats agree the permitting process has become unwieldy, but say the House bill undercuts public input and participation while overly restricting judicial review. □

Trump immigration policies and aging population slow U.S. growth projection, budget office says

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN and MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. population is projected to grow by 15 million in 30 years, a smaller estimate than in previous years, due to President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies and an aging population, the Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday.

The nonpartisan budget office projected that U.S. population will be 364 million in 30 years, 2.2% smaller than it had predicted at this time a year ago. In September, the office issued a revised demographics report that showed Trump's plans for mass deportations and other strict immigration measures would result in roughly 320,000 people removed from the United States over the next 10 years.

The country's total population is projected to stop growing in 2056 and remain roughly the same size as in the previous year, the CBO said. But without immigration, the population would begin to shrink in 2030.

Even if the limits on im-



People stand in Times Square in New York, Aug. 9, 2024.

migration and increased deportations end with the Trump administration in three years, "it's still a demographic shock," said William Frey, a demographer at the centrist Brookings Institution.

Social Security and Medicare, which are already buckling under an aging population, will be under increasing pressure with even fewer than expected

people in the labor force paying taxes.

By the end of the decade, all of the nation's baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, will be over age 65.

With fewer immigrants in the labor force and projections for U.S. fertility rates showing a long-term decline below replacement levels, "that reduces the number of kids who are go-

ing to be born in that four-year period" of the second Trump administration, Frey said.

The latest numbers come as Trump has pushed for the largest mass deportation campaign in history. The CBO's numbers account for the success of those efforts in the first year of his second term in office. The administration has used a variety of methods

to remove people from the country, including through a visa ban on applications for immigrants from some countries and deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in U.S. cities to track down immigrants who are in the country illegally.

Trump's tax and spending law, passed by Congress and signed in July, included roughly \$150 billion to ramp up his deportation agenda over the next four years. This includes money for extending the U.S.-Mexico border wall, building detention centers and adding thousands of law enforcement staff.

When it comes to estimating the nation's population and future growth, immigration is always the wild card because it varies much more year to year than the number of births and deaths. Immigration has fueled U.S. population growth this decade because of an aging population and fertility lower than the replacement rate, with the number of deaths expected to start exceeding the number of births in about five years. □

Associated Press

Justice Department sues Connecticut and Arizona as part of effort to get voter data from the states

By **SUSAN HAIGH**
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Officials in Connecticut and Arizona are defending their decision to refuse a request by the U.S. Justice Department for detailed voter information, after their states became the latest to face federal lawsuits over the issue.

"Pound sand," Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes posted on X, saying the release of the voter records would violate state and federal law.

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division announced this week it was suing Connecticut and Arizona for failing to comply with its requests, bringing to 23 the number of states the

department has sued to obtain the data. It also has filed suit against the District of Columbia.

Attorney General Pam Bondi said the department will "continue filing lawsuits to protect American elections," saying accurate voter rolls are the "foundation of election integrity." Secretaries of state and state attorneys general who have pushed back against the effort say it violates federal privacy law, which protects the sharing of individual data with the government, and would run afoul of their own state laws that restrict what voter information can be released publicly. Some of the data the Justice Department is seeking

includes names, dates of birth, residential addresses, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers.

Other requests included basic questions about the procedures states use to comply with federal voting laws, while some have been more state-specific. They have referenced perceived inconsistencies from a survey from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

Most of the lawsuits target states led by Democrats, who have said they have been unable to get a firm answer about why the Justice Department wants the information and how it plans to use it. Last fall, 10 Democratic secretaries

of state sent a letter to the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security expressing concern after DHS said it

had received voter data and would enter it into a federal program used to verify citizenship status. □



Connecticut Attorney General William Tong speaks during a news conference outside Manhattan federal court, Feb. 14, 2025, in New York.

Associated Press

ICE officer kills a Minneapolis driver as Trump's latest immigration operation begins

By **TIM SULLIVAN** and **GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO**
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — An Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed a Minneapolis driver on Wednesday during the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown on a major American city a shooting that federal officials said was an act of self-defense but that the city's mayor described as "reckless" and unnecessary. The woman was shot during a traffic stop in a residential neighborhood south of downtown Minneapolis, just a few blocks from some of the oldest immigrant markets and about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from where George Floyd was killed by police in 2020. Her killing quickly drew a crowd of hundreds of angry protesters. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, while visiting Texas, described the incident as an "act of domestic terrorism" carried out against ICE officers by a woman who "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him." But Minneapolis Mayor Ja-



A bullet hole is seen in the windshield as law enforcement officers work the scene of a shooting involving federal law enforcement agents, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

cob Frey blasted that characterization as "garbage" and criticized the federal deployment of more than 2,000 officers to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul as part of the immigration crackdown. "What they are doing is not to provide safety in America. What they are doing is causing chaos and distrust," Frey said, calling on the immigration agents to leave. "They're ripping families apart. They're sowing chaos on our streets, and in this case, quite liter-

ally killing people." "They are already trying to spin this as an action of self-defense. Having seen the video myself, I wanna tell everybody directly, that is bullshit," the mayor said. Videos taken by bystanders with different vantage points and posted to social media show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The SUV begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer

standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the SUV at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him. It was not clear from the videos if the vehicle made contact with the officer. The SUV then sped into two cars parked on a curb nearby before crashing to a stop. Witnesses screamed obscenities, expressing shock at what they'd seen. The shooting marks a dramatic escalation of the lat-

est in a series of immigration enforcement operations in major cities under the Trump administration. The death of the 37-year-old Minneapolis woman, whose name wasn't immediately released, was at least the fifth linked to immigration crackdowns. The Twin Cities have been on edge since DHS announced Tuesday that it had launched the operation, which is at least partly tied to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. During her Texas visit, Noem confirmed that DHS had deployed more than 2,000 officers to the area and said they had already made "hundreds and hundreds" of arrests. A large throng of protesters gathered at the scene after the shooting, where they vented their anger at the local and federal officers who were there, including Gregory Bovino, a senior U.S. Customs and Border Patrol official who has been the face of crackdowns in Los Angeles, Chicago and elsewhere. In a scene that hearkened back to the Los Angeles and Chicago crackdowns, bystanders heckled the officers and blew whistles that have become ubiquitous during the operations. □

Notorious New York City-area 'Torso Killer' confesses to 1965 killing

FAIR LAWN, N.J. (AP) — One of the New York City area's most notorious serial killers has confessed to another killing. Police in New Jersey announced Tuesday that Richard Cottingham, known as the "Torso Killer," admitted killing Alys Eberhardt in 1965. The 18-year-old was found dead in her family's home in Fair Lawn, a suburb about 12 miles (19 kilometers) northwest of Manhattan. Investigators reopened the cold case in 2021, and "through countless interviews" over several years, extracted a full confession from Cottingham, "including details that were

never publicly known," the department said in a statement. Fair Lawn Police Chief Joseph Dawicki said Cotting-

ham will not face additional charges as the department closes the case. The 79-year-old has been imprisoned since his ar-

rest in 1980. He is serving three life sentences at the South Woods State Prison in Bridgeton, New Jersey. "Alys was a vibrant young nursing student who was taken from our community far too soon," Dawicki said in a statement. "While we can never bring her back, I am hopeful that her family can find some peace knowing the person responsible has confessed and can no longer harm anyone else." Lawyers in New York and New Jersey who have represented Cottingham over the years didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment Tuesday. Cottingham has claimed

responsibility for up to 100 homicides going back to the 1960s, though authorities in New York and New Jersey have officially linked him to about a dozen. In 2022, he admitting killing five women in the New York City suburbs of Long Island in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was sentenced to 25 years to life for the 1968 slaying of 23-year-old Diane Cusick but received immunity from prosecution for the four other killings as part of the plea deal. Cottingham was previously convicted of killing five other women three in New York City and two in northern New Jersey. □



Richard Cottingham makes a remote appearance at a courtroom in Mineola, N.Y., Dec. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

EU pushes forward long-discussed free trade deal with South America

by **SAM McNEIL**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union is renewing internal negotiations over a free trade agreement with five South American nations neighboring Venezuela a week after the United States' audacious raid there to detain President Nicolás Maduro.

Ministers of Agriculture from across the 27 European Union nations met in Brussels on Wednesday in part to discuss protecting farmers while also reaping the economic and geopolitical benefits of a free trade deal with the Mercosur nations of Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay. The EU's trade negotiator Maroš Šefčovič said after the meeting that while the deal would increase EU agri-food exports by up to 50%. "It's a landmark one. This is the biggest free trade agreement we ever negotiated," Šefčovič said. He said that EU trading partners "value the EU for particular one thing in this turbulent world, one thing above all, this is credibility. So therefore, we must, safeguard this priceless



Italy's Prime minister Giorgia Meloni, right, and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, share a word before the start of a summit in Rome, Friday, June 20, 2025.

Associated Press

currency by remaining a trusted and reliable trading partner."

He said that EU negotiations over Mercosur will continue on Friday amid speculation that a deal could be signed in Paraguay on Jan. 12.

Fierce opposition from France in December, fired up by enraged farmers, derailed the deal and forced European Commis-

sion President Ursula von der Leyen to scrap a trip to Brazil where top EU officials had hoped to sign the EU-Mercosur deal after 26 years of negotiations.

Italy is seen as the linchpin of the deal. If Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni joins the deal's supporters led by Germany, then it will pass over the objections of France and Poland. She

posted on X on Tuesday that she welcomed von der Leyen's proposal to fast-track funds to farmers but Meloni did not promise crucial backing to the deal. The Mercosur trade deal covers a market of 780 million people and a quarter of the globe's gross domestic product, and would progressively remove duties on almost all goods

traded between the two blocs. Such a massive free trade deal would provide a stark counterpoint in South America of economic diplomacy compared to the Trump administration's incursion into Venezuela and threats across the region.

The EU is seeking to forge new trade ties amid commercial tensions with the U.S. and China, and the December delay of Mercosur was seen to diminish the EU's negotiating credibility. French President Emmanuel Macron led opposition to the deal, which he sees as fueling a surging far right that rallies support by criticizing the deal. His centrist government has demanded safeguards to monitor and stop large economic disruption in the EU, increased regulations in the Mercosur nations like pesticide restrictions, and more inspections of imports at EU ports.

French Agriculture Minister Annie Genevard reaffirmed Wednesday France's opposition to the Mercosur deal, because she said it threatens sectors including beef, chicken, sugar, ethanol and honey. □

Netanyahu tries to calm tensions after Israeli bus runs over and kills ultra-Orthodox teen

By **JULIA FRANKEL**
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged calm on Wednesday after a bus driver ran over and killed a teenage boy during a protest by thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jewish demonstrators against a law seeking to draft them into Israel's military.

"I call for restraint to prevent the mood from becoming further inflamed so that, heaven forbid, we do not have additional tragedies," Netanyahu said in a statement, adding that the death would be thoroughly investigated.

The incident on Tuesday evening killed yeshiva student Yosef Eisenthal, who

police said was 14. Video from the protest obtained by The Associated Press showed the boy being trapped under the vehicle while the driver continued to drive on for several meters as onlookers jostled and screamed. Police officers arrested and questioned the bus driver, who told investigators he was attacked by protesters before his vehicle hit the boy. Police said Wednesday that the driver's arrest had been extended until Jan. 15. He has not yet been charged. Protesters had been blocking the road and acting violently toward police officers, throwing eggs and other objects at them, a police spokesperson said. The violence

reflected growing tensions between the Israeli authorities and the ultra-Orthodox, known as Haredim, as the government mulls plans to draft them into the military. When Israel was founded in 1948, a small number of gifted ultra-Orthodox scholars were granted exemptions from the draft, which is compulsory for most Jews in the country. But with a push from politically powerful religious parties, those numbers have swelled over the decades. There is support for rolling back the ultra-Orthodox exemption among many secular Israelis, especially those who have served multiple rounds of duty in the latest war between Israel and the Palestinian

militant Hamas group in Gaza. Measures to draft the ultra-Orthodox have been met with staunch opposition and occasional violence from religious protesters who claim serving in

the military will destroy their way of life. The pushback has created a political problem for Netanyahu, who relies on the support of religious parties in the Israeli Parliament. □



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish men protest against army recruitment in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026.

Associated Press

Mexico becomes crucial fuel supplier to Cuba but pledges no extra shipments after Maduro toppled

By **MARÍA VERZA**

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — As the United States prepares to seize control of Venezuelan oil and the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump hardens its stance toward Cuba, Mexico has emerged as a key fuel supplier to Havana.

It's a role that could further complicate already strained relations with the Trump administration, even though the Mexican government insists that exports to the island have not increased.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum acknowledged on Wednesday that "with the current situation in Venezuela, Mexico has become an important supplier" of crude oil to Cuba, but asserted that "no more oil is being sent than has been sent historically; there is no specific shipment."

She added that those shipments are made via "contracts" or as "humanitarian aid," but offered no concrete figures on the number of barrels exported.

Following the 1959 revolution that toppled dictator Fulgencio Batista, the U.S. imposed a trade embar-



The Cuban flag flies at half-mast at the Anti-Imperialist Tribune near the U.S. embassy in Havana, Cuba, Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, in memory of Cubans who died two days before in Caracas, Venezuela during the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro by U.S. forces.

Associated Press

go on Cuba in response to the nationalization of American-owned property. Under the embargo long denounced by many countries, including Mexico Cubans have suffered economic and energy crises, driving hundreds of thousands of Cubans to migrate, especially to the United States.

State-owned oil company

Petróleos Mexicanos did not immediately respond to a request for data. According to its most recent report to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, from January to Sept. 30, 2025, Mexico shipped 19,200 barrels per day to Cuba: 17,200 barrels of crude oil and 2,000 barrels of refined products.

Jorge Piñón, of the Energy

Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, who tracks shipments using oil tracking services and satellite technology, shared similar data this week with The Associated Press for the same period. He had tracked 22,000 barrels per day and said that the figure dropped to 7,000 barrels after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to Mexico City in

September 2025.

Meanwhile, in the last three months, Maduro's government exported an average of 35,000 barrels a day to Cuba, approximately a quarter of the island's total demand, according to Piñón.

The academic saw no likelihood that Mexico would increase its shipments: "The U.S. government would go bonkers," he said.

"There will be more pressure from the United States regarding Cuba," said Oscar Ocampo of the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, adding that oil will predictably be one of the areas under pressure, a view shared by many experts.

Mexico has historically sent oil to Cuba, especially during periods of power blackouts and social unrest.

After widespread protests in Cuba in 2021, Mexico sent one of its largest humanitarian aid shipments, which included 100,000 barrels of fuel. And in October 2024, it sent more than 400,000 barrels in just a few days following serious blackouts in Cuba, according to data provided at the time by Piñón. □

Philippines evacuates 3,000 villagers after volcano activity raises alert level

By **JIM GOMEZ**

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— A series of mild eruptions at the most active volcano in the Philippines has prompted the evacuation of nearly 3,000 villagers in a permanent danger zone on its foothills, officials said Wednesday.

Authorities raised the 5-step alert around Mayon Volcano in the northeastern province of Albay to level 3 on Tuesday after detecting intermittent rockfalls, some as big as cars, from its peak crater in recent days along with deadly pyroclastic flows a fast-moving avalanche of super-hot rock fragments, ash and gas.

Alert level 5 would indicate a major explosive eruption,

often with violent ejections of ash and debris and widespread ashfall, is underway. "This is already an eruption, a quiet one, with lava accu-

mulating up the peak and swelling the dome, which cracked in some parts and resulted in rockfalls, some as big as cars," Teresito Ba-

colcol, the country's chief volcanologist, told The Associated Press.

He said it is too early to tell if Mayon's restiveness would worsen and lead to a major and violent eruption given the absence of other key signs of unrest, like a spike in volcanic earthquake and high levels of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Troops, police and disaster-mitigation personnel helped evacuate more than 2,800 villagers from 729 households inside a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) radius from the volcano's crater that officials have long designated a permanent danger zone, demarcated by concrete warning signs, Albay provincial officials said. Another 600 villagers liv-

ing outside the permanent danger zone have evacuated voluntarily to government-run emergency shelters to be safely away from the volcano, Claudio Yucot, regional director of the Office of Civil Defense, said.

Entry to the permanent danger zone in the volcano's foothills is prohibited, but thousands of villagers have flouted the restrictions and made it their home or maintained farms on and off for generations. Lucrative businesses, such as sand and gravel quarrying and sightseeing tours, have also thrived openly despite the ban and the mountain's frequent eruptions now 54 times since record began in 1616. □



In this photo provided by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, lava flows from the crater of the Mayon volcano as alert level 3 remains raised in Albay province, north eastern Philippines on Wednesday Jan. 7, 2026.

Associated Press

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of



these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and

land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years,

and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times

on the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserve our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! ☐

Beautiful areas around Aruba



(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. To reach this beauty you must go to San Nicolas and drive up the hill till The Point Lighthouse, park your car and walk until you reach the east point coast and go left along the coastline and good luck going down the cliff.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new facelift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the



Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. ☐



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Nestled in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba, L'Avenue brings a fresh breeze of Belgian charm to the Caribbean. Just over a year since its grand opening, this intimate bistro has quickly made its mark with its warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and elegant yet approachable ambiance.

Whether you're strolling through Palm Beach after a morning at the beach or looking for a special dinner spot, L'Avenue welcomes you with an inviting terrace, stylish décor, and the comforting aroma of Belgian classics crafted to perfection. It's a place where locals, travelers, food lovers, and beer connoisseurs come together — united by a love for great food, heartfelt service, and that unmistakable European flair.

At L'Avenue, every dish tells a story — one of tradition, seasonality, and bold yet balanced flavors. From crispy croquettes and perfectly poured Belgian beers



to steaming pots of fresh mussels flown in weekly, the menu offers something both comforting and surprising. Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience! But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

More Than a Bistro A Culinary Destination

L'Avenue is more than just a place to eat — it's a culinary destination. A thoughtfully curated menu, an extensive selec-

tion of premium Belgian beers, and an atmosphere that balances European elegance with island ease make it one of the most talked-about dining spots in Aruba.

Whether you're looking for a casual lunch, a romantic dinner, or a celebratory evening with friends, L'Avenue delivers a dining experience that's as memorable as it is delicious.

Open daily for lunch and dinner

Located in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba
Come discover Belgium's best — right here at L'Avenue. 



Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!



(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These "coconut stands" can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island, these stands can be found in the following locations:

- Near the red Anchor in San Nicolas
- On the Linear Park in Oranjestad (in front of airport runway)
- At the California Light House hill
- Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin
- Bushiribana Beach

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THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to find the anchor?

The anchor is a “must see” landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when you're visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean Sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the “T” junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the “fluke” or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufac-

tured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the anchor come from?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

“According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain.”

Story 2:

“Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them.”

How did the anchor become a landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985,



three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr., local businessman. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The “anchor”, which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated “To All Seamen” on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr. died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr.

Sam Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated “To All Seamen” in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The best time to visit

When you're planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. □

Aruba: The island of Aloes



ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is

also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which



meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the

total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

Cas di Torto

Cas di torto (also called cas di lodo or cas di bara) is a traditional building technique from Aruba. It refers to a type of houses made of mud with rounded corners. These houses were usually found around the plantations. The few structures that still exist are the oldest structures that are left standing in the country.

The technique probably came over from the Venezuelan Paraguaná Penin-

sula in the 18th century. Existing houses date back 150 years. Until 1925 many houses on Aruba were built using this technique, afterwards it fell into disuse. In 2005 there were 62 cas di torto houses left, of which only four were in good condition.

The skeleton of the houses is made up of round wooden poles placed with distances of 1.5 feet between them. Branches are interwoven between them, complet-



ing the structural support. On this basis, loam is applied, mixed with sand, water and paragrass. This is then coated with aloe vera juice, which gives the white color and helps to protect against the weather.

On top of the poles pieces of wood are fitted that serve as the base for the roof beams. Until 1815 the

roofing usually consisted of corn (maize) stems, afterwards the nuclei of columnar cacti were used. The floor is made of loam, mixed with cement or cow dung.

The houses were usually divided into a kitchen, a living room, a porch and a bedroom. In the kitchen would be a wooden or metal barrel for storing water that

was collected in small rain ponds. Around this barrel a thick loam wall would be erected. Often large families would live in these houses; people would sleep on mats on the floor.

If you visit the Arikok National Park you will be able to see a very nice cas di torto. □



Meet an Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe



(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del Caribe" was born in Nassaustraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a love for music. Starting from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician.

In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from August 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innovations in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world.

One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Loi" Booi.

In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth,

he made several paintings using his unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typical View of Aruba."

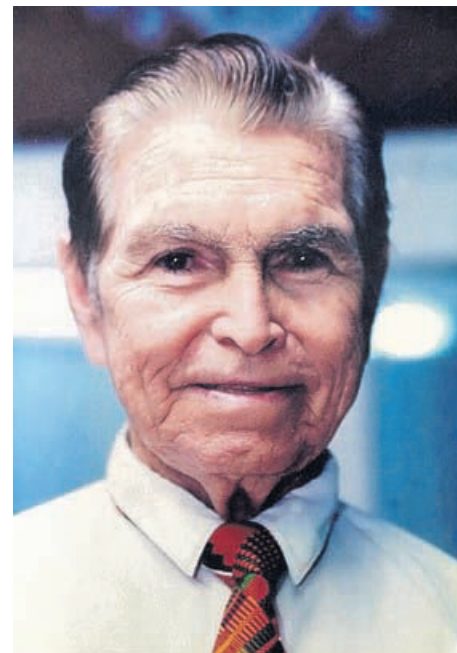
Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs).

Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds Netherlands Antilles.

Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotic technician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states.

Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curacao, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world. His legacy will remain ingrained in



the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers of our community.

Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976.

Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Picuda", a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

Picuda, Sphyræna barracuda, Greater Barracuda

Well known is the Picuda on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is Sphyræna bar-

racuda. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup. In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, the belly, is whiter, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more

"full" than that of mullet or cone-fish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by

sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions. □

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).



CROSSWORD

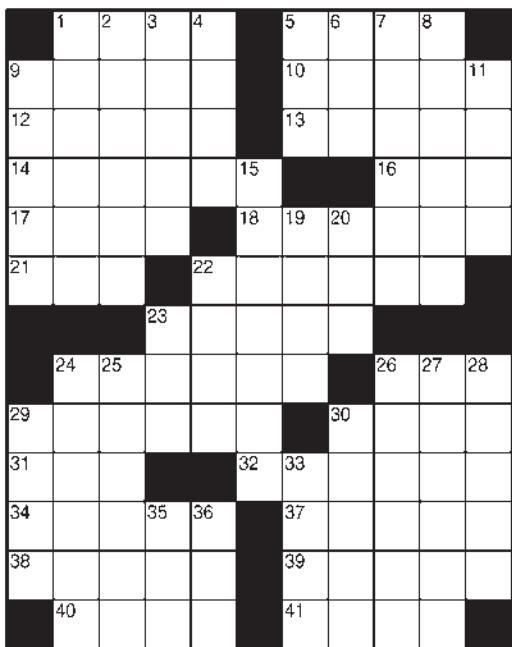
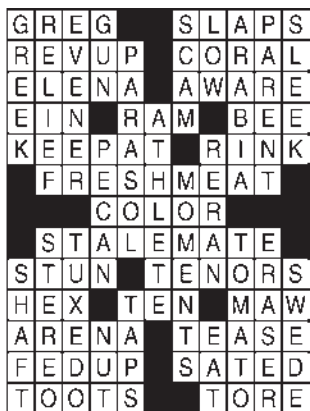
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Common allergen
5 Marshy areas
9 Tubular pasta
10 Dark
12 Be of one mind
13 Take care of
14 Visions
16 Nile serpent
17 Cubicle fixture
18 Texting tools
21 So far
22 Formal
23 Docking spots
24 Sacred beetle
26 Wallet bill
29 Apollo Theater setting
30 On this spot
31 Had supper
32 Prepares veggies
34 Cache
37 Planet's path
38 Knight's wear
- 39 Sounds of suffering
40 Egyptian goddess
41 Border

DOWN

- 1 College award
2 Turmoil
3 Furtive fellow
4 Abound
5 Tour carrier
6 Wallet bill
7 Sparkles
8 Does nothing
9 Rice field
11 Spinning toys
15 Flows item
- 19 Tarragon or thyme
20 Battleship letters
22 Dreadful
23 Buddy
24 Zen enlighten-ment
25 Defeats decisively
26 Brewing item
- 27 Royal fur
28 High homes
29 "Very funny!"
30 King of Judea
33 Big book
35 King of France
36 Hosp. workers



1-16

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

KD RCEII JWDXBJUD MDBESRD
NCD EXB JV NCD UJXEI
SLTWDXRD TR IJLO, MSN TN
MDLHR NJKEXH ZSRNTBD.

— UEXNTL ISNCDX FTLO ZX.

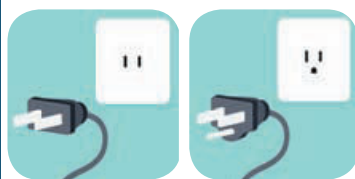
Cryptoquote: THE BAD NEWS IS TIME FLIES. THE GOOD NEWS IS YOU'RE THE PILOT. — MICHAEL ALTSHULER

Cruise ship Schedule: Jan. 07 - 11 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	07	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	B	1
		BRILLIANT LADY	10.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	11.00	20.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	08	AIDABLU	08.00	18.00	B	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
		BRILLANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
FRI	09	OCEANIA NAUTICA	07.00	19.00	B	1
		MS RENAISSANCE	09.00	18.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL DREAM	09.00	22.00	I	1
SAT	10	SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	07.00	15.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN STAR	07.00	19.00	C	1
SUN	11	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

1/8

Answer to previous puzzle



Difficulty: ★★★

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This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from "One Battle After Another."

Associated Press

Warner Bros rejects Paramount takeover again and tells shareholders to stick with Netflix bid

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and MICHELLE CHAPMAN NEW YORK (AP) — Warner Bros. again rejected a takeover bid from Paramount and told shareholders Wednesday to stick with a rival offer from Netflix.

Warner's leadership has repeatedly rebuffed Skydance-owned Paramount's overtures and urged shareholders just weeks ago to back the sale of its streaming and studio business to Netflix for \$72 billion. Paramount, meanwhile, has made efforts to sweeten its \$77.9 billion hostile offer for the entire company.

Warner Bros. Discovery said Wednesday that its board determined Paramount's offer is not in the best interests of the company or its shareholders. It again recommended shareholders support the Netflix deal.

"Paramount's offer continues to provide insufficient value, including terms such as an extraordinary amount of debt financing that create risks to close and lack of protections for our shareholders if a transaction is not completed," Warner Bros. Discovery Chair Samuel Di Piazza Jr. said in a statement. In contrast, he added, the company's agreement with Netflix "will offer superior value at greater levels of certainty." □

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With pool
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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Penthouse 2 BR WK # 1 room # 672
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Price :\$40,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle beach
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25 weeks remaining
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Oduber: Tel.585 8028

San Nicolas:

Aloe:Tel.584 4606

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

New dietary guidelines urge Americans to avoid processed foods and added sugar

By JONEL ALECCIA
AP Health Writer

Americans should eat more whole foods and protein, fewer highly processed foods and less added sugar, according to the latest edition of federal nutrition advice released Wednesday by the Trump administration.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins issued the 2025-2030 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which offer updated recommendations for a healthy diet and provide the foundation for federal nutrition programs and policies. They come as Kennedy has for months stressed overhauling the U.S. food supply as part of his Make America Healthy Again agenda.

"Our message is clear: Eat real food," Kennedy told reporters at a White House briefing.

The guidelines emphasize



Fruit are displayed at Iovine Brothers Produce in Philadelphia, May 29, 2007.

Associated Press

consumption of fresh vegetables, whole grains and dairy products, long advised as part of a healthy eating plan. Officials released a new graphic depicting an inverted version of the long-abandoned food pyramid, with protein, dairy, healthy fats and fruits and vegetables at the top and whole grains at the bottom.

But they also take a new stance on "highly processed" foods, and refined carbohydrates, urging consumers to avoid "packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat or other foods that are salty or sweet, such as chips, cookies and candy." That's a different term for ultraprocessed foods, the super-tasty, energy-dense products that make up more than half of the calories in the U.S. diet and have been linked to chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity. The new guidance backs away from revoking long-standing advice to limit saturated fats, despite signals from Kennedy and Food and Drug Commissioner Marty Makary that the administration would push for more consumption of animal fats to end the "war" on saturated fats.

Instead, the document suggests that Americans should choose whole-food sources of saturated fat

such as meat, whole-fat dairy or avocados while continuing to limit saturated fat consumption to no more than 10% of daily calories. The guidance says "other options can include butter or beef tallow," despite previous recommendations to avoid those fats.

Guidelines were due for an update

The dietary guidelines, required by law to be updated every five years, provide a template for a healthy diet. But in a country where more than half of adults have a diet-related chronic disease, few Americans actually follow the guidance, research shows. The new recommendations drew praise from some prominent nutrition and medical experts.

"There should be broad agreement that eating more whole foods and reducing highly processed carbohydrates is a major advance in how we approach diet and health," said Dr. David Kessler, a former FDA commissioner who has written books about diet and nutrition and has sent a petition to the FDA to remove key ingredients in ultraprocessed foods.

"The guidelines affirm that food is medicine and offer clear direction patients and physicians can use to improve health," said Dr.

Bobby Mukkamala, president of the American Medical Association.

Other experts were relieved that the guidelines didn't go against decades of nutrition evidence linking saturated fat to heart disease, but were critical of a sharp focus on meat and dairy as a primary source of protein instead of plant-based sources.

"Overall, if people eat the way these are recommended, they will be eating more calories, not less," said Marion Nestle, a nutritionist and food policy expert who advised previous editions of the guidance.

The new document is just 10 pages, upholding Kennedy's pledge to create a simple, understandable guideline. Previous editions of the dietary guidelines have grown over the years, from a 19-page pamphlet in 1980 to the 164-page document issued in 2020, which included a four-page executive summary. The guidance will have the most profound effect on the federally funded National School Lunch Program, which is required to follow the guidelines to feed nearly 30 million U.S. children on a typical school day.

The Agriculture Department will have to translate the recommendations into

specific requirements for school meals, a process that can take years, said Diane Pratt-Heavner, spokesperson for the School Nutrition Association. The latest school nutrition standards were proposed in 2023 but won't be fully implemented until 2027, she noted.

Science advisers didn't make ultraprocessed food recommendations

The new guidelines skip the advice of a 20-member panel of nutrition experts, who met for nearly two years to review the latest scientific evidence on diet and health.

That panel didn't make recommendations about ultraprocessed food. Although a host of studies have showed links between ultraprocessed foods and poor health outcomes, the nutrition experts had concerns with the quality of the research reviewed and the certainty that those foods, and not other factors, were the cause of the problems. The recommendations on highly processed foods drew cautiously positive reactions. The FDA and the Agriculture Department are already working on a definition of ultraprocessed foods, but it's expected to take time.

Not all highly processed foods are unhealthy, said Dr. David Ludwig, an endocrinologist and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital.

"I think the focus should be on highly processed carbohydrates," he said, noting that processing of protein or fats can be benign or even helpful.

More protein recommended

The guidelines made a few other notable changes, including a call to potentially double protein consumption. The previous recommended dietary allowance called for 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight about 54 grams daily for a 150-pound person. The new recommendation is 1.2 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. □



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John Harbaugh is fired as the Baltimore Ravens' coach after 18 seasons, including a Super Bowl win

By NOAH TRISTER

AP Sports Writer

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) —

John Harbaugh's 18-year tenure in Baltimore included two distinct periods of success.

After taking over, Harbaugh capitalized on the last few years of Ray Lewis' career, reaching the AFC title game three times in his first five seasons as coach and winning a Super Bowl. When Lamar Jackson arrived in 2018, the Ravens became contenders again — but there's been no conference championship yet for this particular era, and lately Baltimore has experienced more angst than glory.

So Harbaugh is out of a job. Owner Steve Bisciotti fired Harbaugh on Tuesday after the Ravens were one of the league's most disappointing teams this season. They went 8-9 and missed the playoffs after entering Week 1 as one of the Super Bowl favorites.

Baltimore's season ended Sunday night when Tyler Loop missed a last-second field-goal attempt, allowing Pittsburgh to hold on for a 26-24 victory in the game that decided the AFC



Baltimore Ravens head coach John Harbaugh speaks during a news conference after an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press

North title.

"This was an incredibly difficult decision, given the tremendous 18 years we have spent together and the profound respect I have for John as a coach and, most importantly, as a great man of integrity," Bisciotti said in a statement. "Throughout what I firmly believe is a Hall of Fame coaching career, John has delivered a Super Bowl championship to

Baltimore and served as a steadfast pillar of humility and leadership."

Harbaugh was hired after coaching special teams and defensive backs for the Philadelphia Eagles. With the Ravens, he went 193-124 including the postseason. He led the 2012 Ravens to a Super Bowl title, and this season was only the sixth time Baltimore missed the postseason un-

der Harbaugh. That's the same number of times the Ravens won the AFC North with him at the helm.

But most of Baltimore's postseason success came in his first few years. After beating his brother Jim, who was coaching the San Francisco 49ers, in the Super Bowl, John Harbaugh was 9-4 in the playoffs. For the rest of his tenure, he was just 4-7. After the Ra-

vens went three straight seasons without a playoff berth, they drafted Jackson. The star quarterback won two MVPs in his first six years in the league, but Harbaugh's lone run to an AFC championship game with Jackson was wasted two seasons ago when Baltimore lost at home to Kansas City.

"Well, I was hoping for a different kind of message on my last day here, someday, but that day has come today," Harbaugh said in a statement. "It comes with disappointment certainly, but more with GRATITUDE & APPRECIATION. Gratitude to the owner and organization who was willing to bring in a head coach who made his mark with special teams success. A difficult thing to do ... and Appreciation for all the moments, all these years, that are etched into eternity."

The 2025 season was a mess for Baltimore from the start. The Ravens looked great for much of their opener at Buffalo before blowing a late lead. Indeed, squandering significant advantages became a troubling trend in Harbaugh's last few seasons. □

Coco Gauff's two wins lead the defending champion Americans into the United Cup semifinals

PERTH, Australia (AP) — After a singles loss and social media drama earlier in the week, Coco Gauff did all her talking on court Wednesday in the United Cup quarterfinals.

Gauff won twice once in singles and then a clinching victory in mixed doubles to send the Americans into the semifinals in Sydney on Saturday.

Gauff beat Maria Sakkari 6-3, 6-2 to give the defending champion United States a 1-0 lead over Greece. Taylor Fritz, affected by knee tendinitis, had a chance in his singles match to clinch the quarterfinal against Stefanos Tsitsipas, but lost 6-4 7-5. That sent the quarterfinal

match to a mixed doubles decider.

In that match, Gauff and Christian Harrison beat Tsitsipas and Sakkari 4-6, 6-4, 10-8. It was on track for a runaway in the third-set, 10-point tiebreaker when the Americans led 4-0 and 5-1, but the Greek pair rallied to level it at 6-6. Gauff and Harrison held on for the win.

"I think I was striking the ball well today, and when that happens, my movement on the court is also good," Gauff said after her singles win.

"I usually know it's going to be a good day."

On Monday, Gauff dropped a post on social media about a half-hour

before she started her singles match, hoping to add context to her recent comments about American tennis fans.

The ensuing match didn't go well for the No. 4-ranked Gauff, who lost the first five games and struggled in a 6-1, 6-7 (3), 6-0 loss to No. 42 Jessica Bouzas Maneiro. But Fritz won his singles match against Spain and Gauff and Harrison combined in mixed doubles to clinch top spot in Group A. In a night quarterfinal at Perth on Wednesday, Stan Wawrinka, playing in his farewell tour this year before retiring, was scheduled to lead Switzerland against Argentina.

At Sydney, Hubert Hur-

kacz and Iga Świątek were victorious in their singles matches to give Poland a winning 2-0 lead over Netherlands and a place

in the quarterfinals from Group F. Poland is expected to play Australia in the quarterfinals. □



Coco Gauff of the United States plays a forehand to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland during a women's singles match of the China Open tennis tournament, in Beijing, on Sept. 30, 2025.

Associated Press

Islanders, Rangers and Devils have vastly different goaltending situations midway through the season

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ilya Sorokin was spotless in his return to the net Tuesday night, 24 hours after good friend Igor Shesterkin went down with an injury that looked like it could be serious. Across the ice from Sorokin, Jacob Markstrom gave up goals on the first two shots he faced and could not make a save when needed on the way to allowing nine of them. Early in the New Year and just past the midway point of the NHL season, the three teams in the New York area are in very different spots when it comes to goaltending, and that contrast could portend



New York Islanders goaltender Ilya Sorokin (30) stops a shot during the second period of an NHL hockey game against the New Jersey Devils Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, in Elmont, N.Y.

Associated Press

spiring."

Shesterkin has been one of the biggest reason the Rangers have stayed afloat while losing 14 of their first 19 home games and struggled at times to score. His 17 wins rank third in the league, his .913 save percentage eighth and his 2.45 goals-against average 12th.

But they won't have him available for at least the next week after putting Shesterkin on injured reserve with what the club called a lower-body injury. Shesterkin appeared to injure his left leg when it bent awkwardly while trying to avoid a collision with Utah's JJ Peterka in the first period Monday night, and he put no weight on it while being helped off the ice.

Shesterkin continues to be evaluated, and the Rangers cannot afford a long stretch without him and top defenseman Adam Fox, who's out at least the next 10 games on long-term IR.

The Devils recently got their best player back from injury, when Jack Hughes returned Dec. 21 after missing a little over a month following finger surgery from cutting his right hand at a team dinner. They outshot the Islanders 44-24, including 15-7 in the first period, but Markstrom could not keep the puck out of his net.

Barzal's goal 62 seconds in would have been tough for anyone to stop, but Markstrom also got beaten clean off the rush twice by Anthony Duclair, who picked up his first hat trick in more than six years. Markstrom allowed nine goals on 24 shots in a dud of a performance that put a damper on some strong starts lately.

"I didn't like the quality of chance that we had given up, and Marky has been playing quite well for us and I thought deserved the opportunity to stay in through the first period and decided to go back out with him again in the second," coach Sheldon Keefe said. □

how things go the rest of the way with a tight playoff race shaping up in the Eastern Conference.

Getting Sorokin back is a boon for the Islanders, who have won five of their past seven games to keep pace with first-place Carolina. Sorokin was sharp with no signs of rust shutting out New Jersey, sliding side to side looking like there were zero ill effects from the nagging lower-body injury that kept him out since Dec. 19. "I was a little nervous because of not playing in two weeks and feel a little bit not in my game in the first couple minutes," Sorokin said after the 9-0 rout made him the Islanders' career shutout leader with 26. "But after shot by shot, I start to feel confidence." But this is nothing new for the franchise netminder on Long Island. Since the Islanders abruptly switched goalie coaches from Pierre Greco to Sergei Naumovs on Oct. 22, Sorokin has a 2.15 goals-against average and a .926 save percentage.

"He's just so solid," teammate Mat Barzal said. "He doesn't take a second off, that guy, honestly. He works as hard as anybody I've ever seen, day in day off, off days, practice. Whatever it is, he's the last guy at the rink, and he's in-

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